

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY

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TAGS: EAGR, VE

SUBJECT:COUNTRY FINANCIAL PROGRAMS - AGRICULTURE

REFERENCE: STATE 231396

1. DURING AMBASSADOR SHLAUDEMAN'S RECENT CONSULTATION VISIT TO WASHINGTON, WE AGREED NOT TO PURSUE NEGOTIATION AT THIS TIME OF THE PROPOSED BILATERAL AGREEMENT TRANSMITTED REFTEL. RATHER IT WAS DECIDED WE SHOULD TRY TO MOVE FORWARD INITIALLY WITH A MODEST TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITY THAT COULD SHOW SOME IMMEDIATE RESULTS AS WELL AS LEAD TO A MORE SUBSTANTIAL FOLLOW-ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IF APPROPRIATE. IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT SOME FORM

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OF THE PROPOSED BILATERAL AGREEMENT WOULD BE NEEDED WHEN

AND IF LONGER-TERM AGRICULTURAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ADVISORS ARE REQUESTED.

2. FOR THE INITIAL TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITY, USDA SUGGESTS THE RECRUITMENT OF A TEAM OF THREE SENIOR RESEARCH ADMINISTRATORS FROM THE USDA AND THE LAND GRANT SYSTEM. THIS TEAM WOULD SPEND A PERIOD OF ABOUT SIX WEEKS IN VENEZUELA AND WOULD HELP PLAN A COORDINATED, PRACTICAL RESEARCH PROGRAM, WOULD IDENTIFY ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM

WHERE U.S.SPECIALISTS COULD CONTRIBUTE THE MOST, WOULD SPECIFY PROCEDURES FOR OPERATING THE PROGRAM, AND WOULD RECOMMEND APPROPRIATE ACADEMIC OR ON-THE-JOB TRAINING. IN OTHER WORDS SUCH A TEAM COULD PROVIDE IMMEDIATE INPUTS IN THE SHAPING AND OPERATION OF A RESEARCH PROGRAM AT THE SAME TIME AS IT IS DISCUSSING AND DEFINING POSSIBLE FUTURE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS.

3. USDA ESTIMATES COST OF SUCH A TEAM, ASSUMING SIX WEEKS OR THIRTY WORKING DAYS, WOULD TOTAL \$29,500 FOR SALARIES, INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL, PER DIEM, AND ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS. SHOULD THE GOV DESIRE TO PROCEED WITH THIS ACTIVITY, OR ANY ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITY THEY MIGHT WISH TO PROPOSE, AN OFFICIAL REQUEST WOULD BE NEEDED. ON THE BASIS OF THIS REQUEST, A SECTION 607 DETERMINATION WOULD BE SOUGHT FROM AID TO AUTHORIZE USDA TO PERFORM REIMBURSABLE SERVICES IN VENEZUELA. BEFORE BEING ABLE TO PROCEED USDA WOULD ALSO REQUIRE AN ADVANCE OF FUNDS FROM THE GOV FOR THE CURRENT ESTIMATED COST. FINAL PAYMENT WOULD BE ON THE BASIS OF ACTUAL EXPENDITURES.

4. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY AND GOV REACTION TO ABOVE PROPOSAL. USDA PREPARED DISCUSS THIS AND ANY OTHER PROPOSAL FURTHER DURING UPCOMING TRIP TO THE U.S. OF VENEZUELA'S MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE.

5. SUGGESTED TEXT OF PROPOSED JOINT COMMUNIQUE ON GENERAL TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN AGRICULTURE WHICH COULD BE ISSUED DURING MINISTER'S VISIT FOLLOWS IN SEPTEL.

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